Distance Education and the Need for Broadband Access
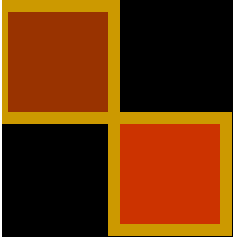
Connecting Rural Indiana 2007
July 26, 2007
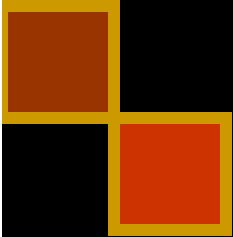
Overview

- The scope of distance education today
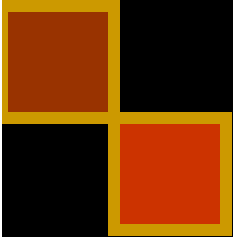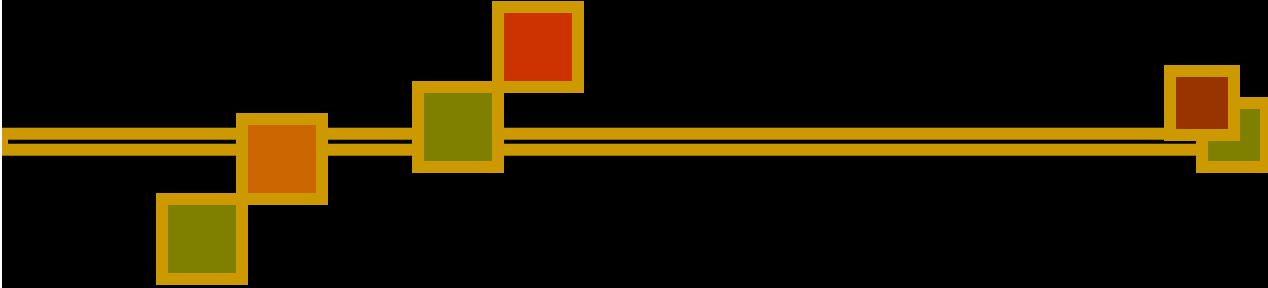- Debunking the myths
- The "new normal" in higher education

Today's panel

- Dr. Henry Merrill, Indiana University
- Lance Woods, University of Southern Indiana
- Carol Brunty, IHETS
- Susan Scott, IHETS

Scope: www.icn.org

- All public institutions and many independents engaged

- Not only courses but whole programs

- Content opportunities broad

- Response substantial and growing (faster than for campus programs)

All public institutions and many independents are engaged.

- BSU: 12/183
- ISU: 38/189
- IU: 25/679
- Ivy Tech: 11/689
- Purdue: 7/148
- USI: 17/110
- Vincennes: 26/539

- Indiana Tech: 5/74
- IWU: 7
- St. Mary-of-the-Woods: 36/436
- Taylor Online: 24/320
- U. of St. Francis: 1

[programs/courses]

Courses and whole programs

Fall 2007 ICN listings:

- 3,367 courses (includes high school, too)
- 39 associate degrees
- 48 bachelor's degrees
- 33 graduate degrees
- 57 certificate and licensure programs

Content opportunities: real choice

- Nursing and health professions
- Business
- Education
- Technology and engineering
- Criminal justice, human services
- Transferable general education
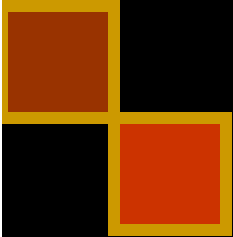- Dual-credit and early enrollment for HS

Healthy response keeps growing

- 2005-06 course enrollments at 148,307 (up 26% over previous year)
- 2006-07 not yet complete, but so far are trending up by 20% over 2005-06
- In human terms, that's approaching 40,000 people in fully online classes.
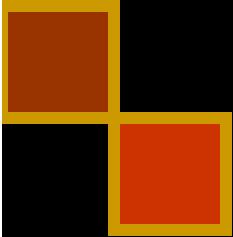
The real students

- Most are adults, financially independent
- Working at least half-time, attending school part-time
- Family obligations (kids and/or parents)
- They choose DE because it fits into their lives: they can choose when to "attend" and do their assignments.
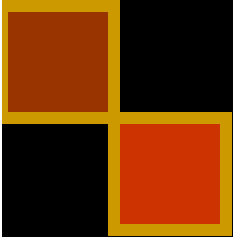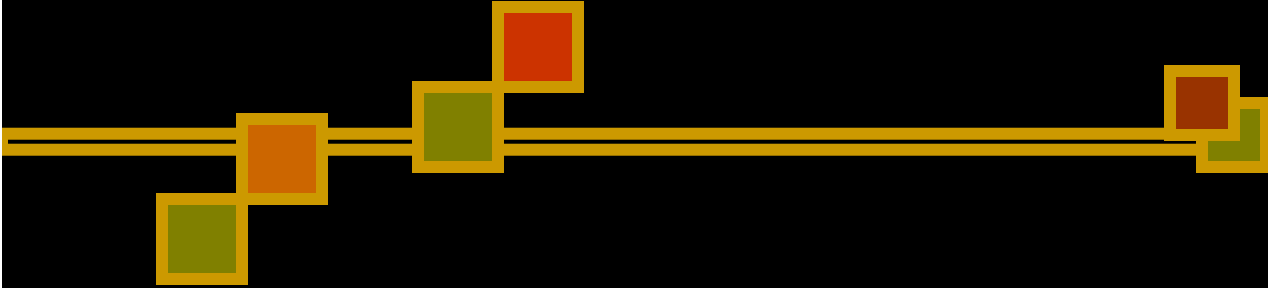- It isn't about geographic distance, it's about *time*.

Debunking the myths

- "Rural people don't trust technology."
- "Adults don't want online learning."
- "Quality is second-rate."
- "Drop-outs are high."
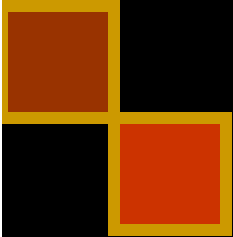- "People take DE because they're lazy."

The new normal

- Technology is fully mainstream in higher ed today, on campus and off. Even "traditional" classes require online assignments, online library resources, online projects.
- More and more "hybrid" or "blended" programs and classes are under way.
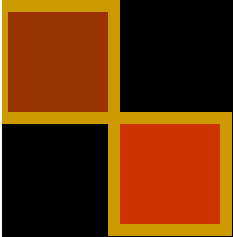- Many students take both at once.

Dial-up obstacles

- Technical problems take on a new dimension when you're paying money for tuition and expecting to learn something—not just a minor irritant any more.

- Dial-up ties up phone and computer options for the rest of the family.

- Dial-up connections present added security issues for campus IT staff and servers.

This is now.

- Long session times for reading, research, and online discussions - what a CMS discussion looks like:
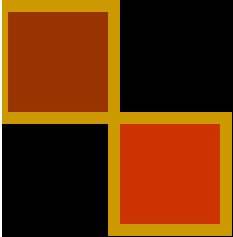

- https://oncourse.iu.edu/portal

This is now.

- Incorporation of video and audio streamed resources, podcasting, web conferencing

This is now.

- Large downloads required, from online library databases, scientific data sets, and videos (special problems with dial-up from losing access in mid-download)
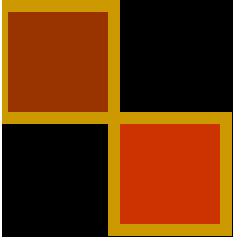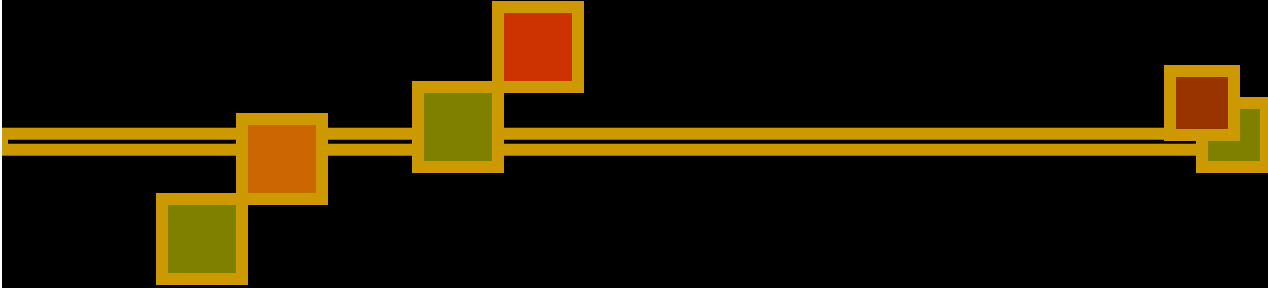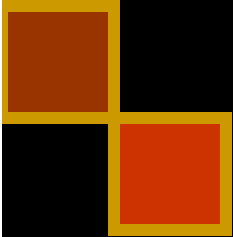
This is now and, increasingly, the future.

- Simulations, animations, remote manipulation of devices, online game-style exams, class team projects presented as a web site, etc.

- http://www.secondlife.com/

- University of Central Florida - business
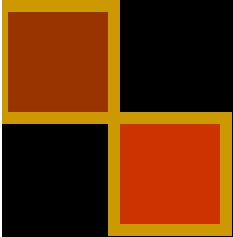
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4T4zTStVK6Y

What's at stake

- Indiana *must* increase educational participation and attainment of adults . . . in every part of the state.

- Rural living can hold a wonderful quality of life . . . but people must see a future not shut off from the rest of the world.

- Indiana's colleges and universities have made substantial investments to increase access to postsecondary (and secondary) education.

- Limited broadband availability is a real drain on realizing the benefits of that investment.
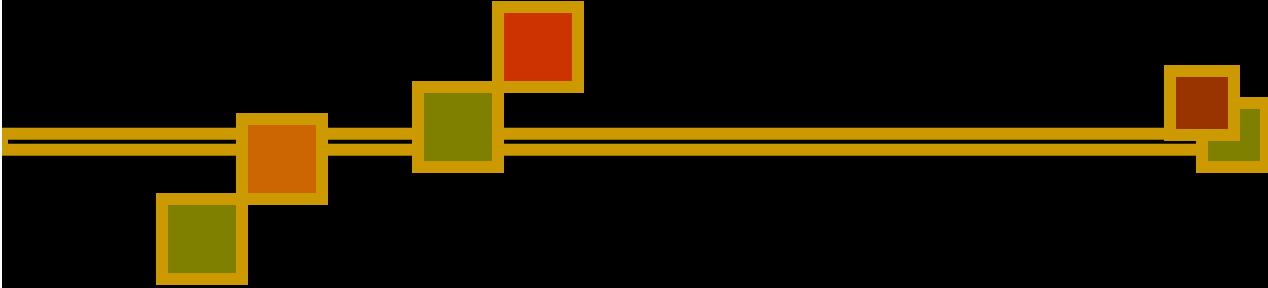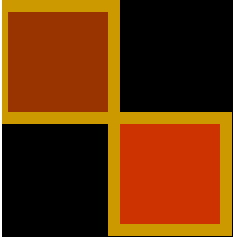
How to find out more

- Contact any of the panelists
- Check out ICN on the web at www.icn.org as a starting point
- Contact your nearest college continuing ed or online learning officials

Additional resources

- **Pew Internet & American Life Project** (especially reports on "Home Broadband Adoption 2007" and "Rural Broadband Internet Use"): http://www.pewinternet.org
- **The Information Technology & Innovation Foundation** (especially "Assessing Broadband in America" and "The Case for a National Broadband Policy"): http://www.innovationpolicy.org
- **Internet2**: http://www.internet2.edu

- **Dr. Henry Merrill:** hmerrill@iupui.edu

  Executive Director, Community Learning Network, IUPUI

- **Lance Woods:** lcwoods@usi.edu

  Operations Manager, Instructional Technology Services, USI

- **Carol Brunty:** cbrunty@ihets.org

  ICN Student Services Manager, IHETS

- **Susan Scott:** sscott@ihets.org

  Director of E-Learning, IHETS